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CHRONOLOGY OF CANADIAN ARCTIC EXPLORATIONS AND PRESENT DAY ARCTIC OPERATIONS OF THE CANADIAN COAST GUARD.

(Handout at The Arctic Transportation Conference, Yellowknife, 1970)

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CHRONOLOGY OF

CANADIAN ARCTIC EXPLORATIONS AND PRESENT DAY
ARCTIC OPERATIONS OF THE CANADIAN COAST GUARD

SEPT. 1, 1880 - The British Government granted to Canada all the territory in the northern waters of the continent of America and Arctic Ocean, from 60 degrees west longitude to 141 degrees west longitude and as far north as 90 degrees, that is to say, the North Pole.

1884-85 and 86 The Canadian Government despatched an expedition to explore the outlying lands to the Far North, to determine navigation conditions in Hudson Bay and Strait, and to establish observations posts.

In 1884 the "Neptune" under the command of Lieutenant A. R. Gordon, R. N., with geologist Dr. Robert Bell and a party of meteorological observers, visited Chesterfield Inlet and Port Nelson, among other places. Second and third voyages were made in the "Alert" in 1885 and 1886, these also under Gordon's command. Soundings were completed at Churchill and Port Nelson. Lieut. Gordon reported in favour of Churchill as a suitable site for port development. In each of these expeditions, observers were left at shore stations to spend the following winter and to report on ice conditions.

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1897 - Cdr. W. Wakeham with geologists Dr. R. Bell and A. P. Low, set out in the S. S. "Diana" to examine earlier and later navigation in the Hudson Strait. Geology on Baffin and Ungava was studied.

1903 - The Dominion Government in the Spring of 1903, sent a ship to patrol the waters of Hudson Bay and those adjacent to the eastern Arctic Islands; also to assist in establishing, on the adjoining shores, permanent stations for the collection of customs the administration of justice, and the enforcement of the law. The "Neptune", largest and most powerful vessel of the Newfoundland sealing fleet, was chartered for this work. The ship left Halifax in August 1903, under Capt. S. W. Bartlett, with A. P. Low geologist, in command of the expedition. The ship visited Cumberland Sound whaling stations, then steamed to Chesterfield Inlet where the party wintered.

At Fullerton, an R. C. M. P. post was built. The following July they went to Ellesmere Island, landing at Cape Herschel where a document taking formal possession in the name of King Edward VII for the Dominion, was read and the flag was raised. A copy of the document was placed in a rock cairn at the end of the cape.

1906-11 - Capt. Joseph Bernier in the Government steamer "Arctic" was sent to patrol the more remote waters of the Archipelago. In 1906-07 he went west as far as Cape

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Walker in Parry Channel, at the entrance to Peel Sound and Nelson Griffiths Point on Melville Island. He sailed some distance down Peel Sound and Prince Regent Inlet, entered Admiralty and Navy Board Inlets and went north along the east of Devon Island into Jones Sound, where he made his northernmost landings at Cone Island and King Edward VII Point. The "Arctic" spent the Winter in Pond Inlet.

In 1908 he went to Cape Hay on Melville Island and wintered at Winter Harbour, where at Parry's Rock on July 1, 1909, he unveiled a tablet marking the "annexing of the whole Arctic Archipelago". During the winter parties from the "Arctic" crossed M'Clure Strait and at Mercy Bay, found relics of M'Clure's expedition but no trace of his ship "Investigator", which was abandoned there in 1851.

Capt. Bernier returned to the Arctic in 1910, hoping to navigate the Northwest Passage, but ice prevented this from being achieved. He wintered at Arctic Bay and survey parties from the "Arctic" explored extensively, crossing Baffin Island to Fury and Hecla Strait. Bernier returned south in September, 1911 via Davis Strait.

REGULAR ANNUAL EASTERN ARCTIC PATROL

1922 - The Canadian Government began regular annual patrols to the

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Arctic, the first vessel used being the C. G. S. "Arctic" under the command of Capt. J. E. Bernier. In 1926 she was replaced by the "Beothic" which in turn was replaced by the Hudson Bay Company S. S. "Maseopie" for the annual voyage. Following the wreck of the "Maseopie" on a reef while entering Cape Dorset Harbour in 1947, various small craft were used for Arctic operations.

1947 - A joint Canadian-United States program was begun to establish weather stations in the Arctic archipelago. The task of transporting supplies to these outposts and to other joint defence establishments in the North was confided to United States agencies in the beginning. The Canadian government's activities in the North were increasing rapidly, however, as Canadians began to investigate the extent of the Arctic's vast natural resources, and Canada gradually assumed the entire responsibility for the maritime resupply of all joint installations. At the same time, there was increased emphasis upon the improvement of living standards of the native population and extensive programs toward that end were being developed by the departments concerned.

1950 - As a result of the growing need, the Department of Transport put into service the new ship "C. D. Howe", designed primarily for Arctic work. Since then, the ship has travelled more than 15,000 miles each year on

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its Eastern Arctic Patrol, delivering supplies to Eastern Arctic settlements, while medico-dental and x-ray examinations of Eskimos and other Arctic residents are carried out aboard the ship.

Plans were under way for a new icebreaker, to be one of the world's largest and most powerful.

ARCTIC UNDERTAKINGS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT SINCE 1953

1953 - The Transport Department icebreaker "d'Iberville", newly commissioned, sailed to Resolute Bay and Alexandria Fiord, the latter on the east coast of Ellesmere Island. D.O.T. also carried out shipping supply and icebreaker escort operations in Hudson Bay region and operated the Eastern Arctic Patrol.

1954 - The department assumed the task of resupplying the joint weather stations at Resolute Bay and Eureka. It also carried out shipping, supply and icebreaker escort operations in Hudson Bay region, as well as the Regular Eastern Arctic Patrol. Season's total cargo, 8,000 tons.

1955 - The Department of Transport took over the lightering ashore of supplies which were taken to Mid-Canada

Line bases by other shipping agencies. C.M.S. "d'Iberville" was unable to reach Eureka in that year, the only time such an occurrence was recorded up to the present. D.O.T. carried out shipping, supply and icebreaker escort operations in Hudson Bay area, as well as the Regular Eastern Arctic Patrol. Total tonnage handled was 22,000 tons.

1956 - The Department of Transport carried out the lightering ashore of supplies at Mid-Canada Line bases on Hudson Bay as well as the re-supply of the joint weather stations via Resolute and Eureka. It also performed shipping, supply and icebreaker escort operations in Hudson Bay region, as well as the annual Eastern Arctic Patrol. Total cargo for season, 41,000 tons.

1957 - Re-supply of joint weather stations and Mid-Canada including both the shipping and lightering. Carried out usual operations; icebreaker escort, etc., in Hudson Bay, as well as Eastern Arctic Patrol. Total tonnage for season, 60,000 tons.

1958 - Re-supply of the joint weather stations, the Mid-Canada Line bases on Hudson Bay, shipments to Frobisher Bay and the Foxe Basin DEW Line stations. Also regular Hudson Bay shipping and escort work and Eastern Arctic Patrol. Total for season, 77,000 tons.

1959 - Re-supply of the joint weather stations, Mid-Canada Line bases, Foxe Basin DEW Line, Frobisher Bay, Mid-Baffin

DEW Line, plus calls at Labrador ports. Also usual Hudson Bay shipping and escort duties and Eastern Arctic Patrol. Total for season 110,000 tons.

1960 - Re-supply of joint weather stations, Mid-Canada Line bases, Foxe Basin DEW Line, Frobisher Bay, Mid-Baffin Island DEW Line: calls at Labrador ports, also usual Hudson Bay route shipping escort and Eastern Arctic Patrol.

CMS "Camsell" made her first trip into Western Arctic from Vancouver, carrying supplies and escorting supply vessels working out of Tuktoyaktuk, N.W.T., into Coronation Gulf and Queen Maude Gulf; supplied Western Arctic settlements as far east as Shepherd's Bay on Boothia Peninsula. Total tonnage, Eastern and Western Arctic, 107,000 tons. CMS "John A. Macdonald", went into service in September and made her first northern voyage into the Hudson Bay area.

1961 - Around 110,000 tons of cargo handled by 28 ships, including 11 chartered vessels, seven dry cargo and four tankers. CMS "John A. Macdonald" penetrated Nansen Sound, farthest north yet recorded by any Canadian ship. En route stopped at Sherwood Head, Axel Heiberg Island, where joint Department of Transport - U. S. Weather Bureau meteorological party established world's first isotope-powered automatic weather recording station.

"Macdonald" then engaged in hydrographic and ocean-

graphic work north of Viscount Melville and Lancaster Sounds, going into Penny Strait, where no ship had travelled since early explorers visited there 100 years earlier.

Also visited Winter Harbour on Melville Island and went to entrance of M'Clintock Channel, Byam and Austin Channels and then through Prince Regent Inlet into Gulf of Boothia, for scientific work. Returned by way of Fury and Hecla Strait and Foxe Channel, circumnavigating Baffin Island.

CMS "Labrador" went farthest West, reaching M'Clure Strait almost to Mercy Bay on Banks Island; 116 degrees 22 minutes West longitude. Later "Labrador" worked south into Prince Regent Inlet and Gulf of Boothia, stopping at Victoria Harbour to pick up relics from Sir John Ross expedition of 1829-1832; two anchors and parts of steam engine from Ross ship "Victory" abandoned there in 1832.

Later stopped at Fury Beach and picked up two anchors believed from HMS "Fury", which with HMS "Hecla" was one of vessels of second Parry Expedition; the ship was crushed in ice and lost in 1825.

CMS "Camsell" made her second trip along the West Arctic Coast, escorting supply craft as far as Gjoa Haven, Spence Bay and Shepherd Bay. En route rescued the crew of the Hudson Bay vessel "Fort Hearne", which was damaged

by ice.

1962 - In January of 1962 the Department of Transport's fleet, formerly known as the Canadian Marine Service, officially became the Canadian Coast Guard. In the Summer of that year seven CCG icebreakers, CCGS "C.D.Howe", seven NSVs, "Mink" and "Marmot", seven chartered dry cargo ships and three chartered tankers handled about 100,000 tons in the Arctic, making the usual supply calls. Extensive scientific work carried out aboard CCGS "John A. Macdonald", "d'Iberville", "Labrador", "N.B. McLean" and "Camsell".

"John A. Macdonald" and "d'Iberville" both went to Eureka and "Macdonald" proceeded to end of Tanquary Fiord to set all-time "farthest north" record within the Archipelago. Materials for establishment of research station were put ashore there and cairn erected to commemorate the event, "Macdonald" then returned to Resolute by making first passage ever of uncharted part of Norwegian Bay north and west of Graham Island, and of Belcher Channel. Reached Resolute by way of Penny Strait, thus being first ship to circumnavigate Devon Island. Went westward into M'Clure Strait almost to Prince Patrick Island and only 50 miles from Mould Bay.

Later circumnavigated Prince of Wales Island, recording another "first ever", entering by Peel Sound

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and returning to Viscount Melville Sound by way of M'Clintock Channel, long believed permanently impassable. Later returned via Peel Sound into Gulf of Boothia and escorted Department of Mines and Technical Surveys hydrographic vessel "Baffin" by way of Fury and Hecla Strait into Foxe Basin.

19'3 - "Macdonald" and "Montcalm" suffered some ice damage but were able to continue duties. CCGS "Nanook", depot ship, damaged so badly in Wellington Channel she was taken to Resolute, then to Frobisher, for temporary repairs and then towed back to Halifax and placed on reserve. Two other shallow-draft supply vessels suffered extensive damage and were towed south.

CCGS "Labrador" pushed north into Kennedy Channel, lat. 81 degrees, 16 minutes north; only six nautical miles short of the northernmost point reached previous year by CCGS "John A. Macdonald" in Tanquary Fiord. "Macdonald" reached Eureka but did not go into Tanquary Fiord. Despite ice difficulties, extensive hydrographic and other scientific work was carried out.

19'4 - Seventeen Canadian Coast Guard ships went north, as well as 19 cargo vessels, for the re-supply task. Season's tonnage totalled about 90,000 tons.

CCGS "Labrador" set new "farthest north" for Canadian ships, reaching 81 degrees, 45 minutes north on Sept. 7.

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She was only about 60 miles from Alert. "John A. Macdonald" went west toward Beaufort Sea but could not penetrate M'Clure Strait because of very heavy ice. "Camsell" encountered very heavy ice early in season in Western Arctic off north coast of Alaska. She lost one seaman in accident in Gulf of Alaska during return voyage when hydrographic launch broke loose during gale.

1965 - Sixteen CCGS ships took part in the Summer Arctic operations, and five chartered vessels participated, some of these making two voyages. Tonnage handled in the season was expected again to be around 100,000 tons.

1966 - Fifteen Canadian Coast Guard ships, along with seven chartered commercial vessels, took part in the resupply operations during the Summer and Fall of 1966. The Victoria-based icebreaker CCGS "Camsell" recorded an historic "first" when, after carrying out her regular escort and buoy-laying duties along the Arctic coastline, she went north from Spence Bay to Bellot Strait, then returned to Cambridge Bay by Victoria Strait, thus being the first ship ever to circumnavigate King William Island. A total of about 100,000 tons of cargo was handled by the supply convoys during the season.

1967 - Fifteen Coast Guard ships, including seven icebreakers, two chartered tankers and four chartered dry cargo vessels moved about 115,000 tons during the resupply operations.

CCGS "John A. Macdonald", after completing her Eastern

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Arctic tasks, traversed the Northwest Passage via Peel Sound, Franklin Strait and Victoria Strait, being the first large ship ever to do so.

After aiding shipping in the Western Arctic, where ice conditions had been so severe the Victoria-based icebreaker CCGS "Camsell" could not meet the demand for icebreaker help, "John A. Macdonald" was called on to accompany the U. S. Coast Guard icebreaker "Staten Island" in going to the aid of the damaged and trapped U. S. icebreaker "Nothwind", nearly 500 miles inside of the Arctic ice pack north of Point Barrow, Alaska. The Canadian ship led the rescue mission successfully, but the delay forced the abandonment of plans to return east via the Northwest Passage and the ship returned to Dartmouth, N. S. by way of the Panama Canal.

1968 - Fourteen Canadian Coast Guard ships and eight chartered vessels took part in the resupply operations. Total cargo handled by the supply convoys amounted to more than 105,000 tons.

There was considerable activity in support of increasing exploration for oil by private industry in the western Arctic. The Coast Guard fleet also continued to provide accommodation and serve as floating bases for scientists engaged in a continuing program of oceanographic and related research in the Arctic.

1969 - Thirteen Canadian Coast Guard vessels, five chartered dry cargo ships and six tankers went north on the resupply task. CCGS "John A. Macdonald" was assigned to support of the "Manhattan" project.

CCGS "C. D. Howe" did not participate in the northern program, other than to make one trip up the Labrador Coast. The medical survey, which had been one of her principal tasks in previous years, was no longer necessary because of the development of increased medical services and facilities in the north and of more air services to meet related needs.

In 1969, the Department used the Sikorsky S-64 "Skycrane" helicopter as a ship-to-shore method of delivering supplies; the trials proved succesful and further trials were scheduled for 1970.

1970 - The Ministry (so renamed in February 1970) again carried out the resupply of some 40 sites in the Eastern Arctic. Four tankers were chartered with three making two voyages each; four dry cargo vessels were also chartered and some ten other vessels were engaged on a rate-per-ton basis.

The Sikorsky "Skycrane" was again chartered on a second trial basis with a specialized ship, the Fort St. Louis, and transported supplies to five ports in the Arctic. The voyage took approximately 42 days as compared to 75 days using the conventional means of barging cargo from ship to shore. The economics of

the "Skycrane" type of concept is being evaluated and if the results are satisfactory it is conceivable that this method of ship-to-shore delivery will be adopted to a greater extent.

The vessels under charter were supported by seven icebreakers, three northern supply vessels and one hotel ship. Approximately 100,000 tons of cargo was shipped into and out of the Eastern Arctic ports. In addition to supporting the commercial vessels, the icebreakers were engaged in hydrographic and other scientific work in support of the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources. CCGS JOHN A. MACDONALD also escorted a tanker and dry cargo vessel into Eureka for Panarctic Oils Limited; other icebreakers escorted three cargo ships to Freeman's Cove, Bathurst Island, for a consortium of oil exploration companies.

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